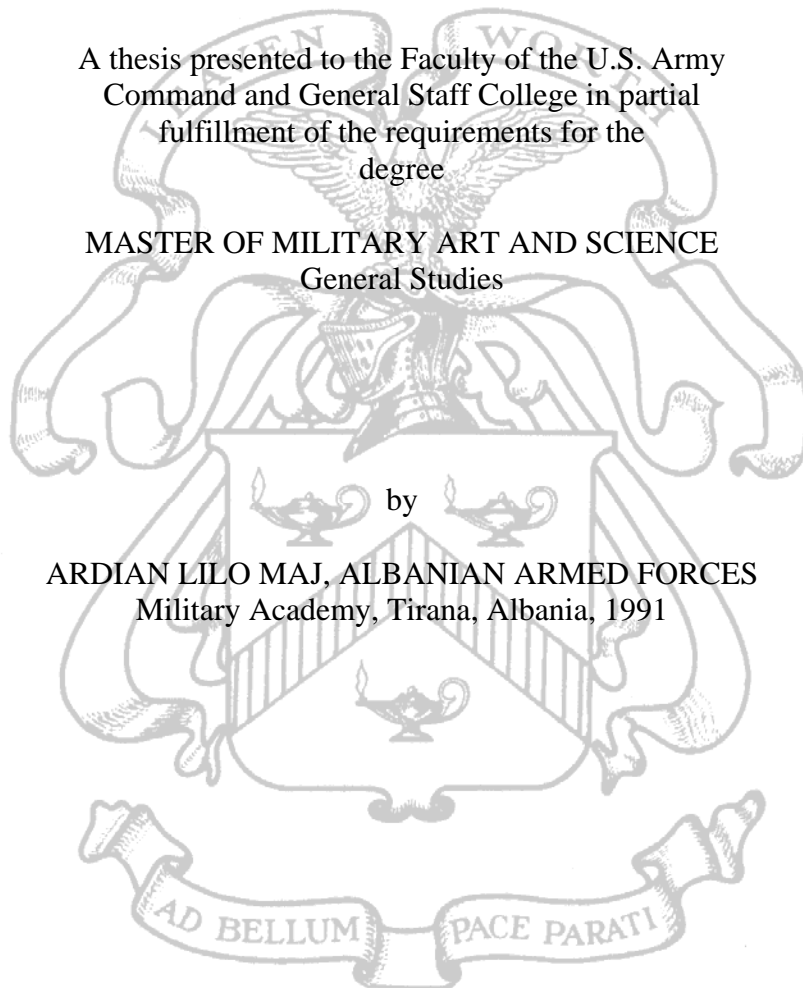


OFFICER CANDIDATES EDUCATION AND TRAINING
IN THE ALBANIAN ARMED FORCES

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army
Command and General Staff College in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE
General Studies

by
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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

OFFICER CANDIDATES EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN THE ALBANIAN ARMED FORCES, by Major Ardian Lilo, Albanian Armed Forces, 77 pages.

The unpredictable global, regional and national security environment will require capable institutions and competent leaders to address future challenges. The Republic of Albania now finds itself a more secure NATO member country standing between eastern and western civilizations. The future environment will require competent officers to serve protecting the national interests and to be prepared to act in the international environment and institutions.

This thesis examines the system of officer candidates' education in the Albanian Armed Forces. The cadets' education and training has a direct impact on the future of individuals, and on the future of the Albanian Armed Forces and the image of the country. A modern adult education will provide critical and creative thinking officers with high moral and intellectual values that are able to adapt to the changing environment and face future challenges. The imperative is to provide an appropriate, attractive contemporary and affordable education.

The author's purpose is to provoke thoughts and discussions about the officer candidates' education system in Albania in light of the accepted new role and warfare in the future environment. The focus will be on the appropriateness of the existing system and recommending improvements and suggesting an alternative model.

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ACRONYMS

AAF	Albanian Armed Forces
AF	Armed Forces
BA	Bachelor of Art
BOC	Basic Officer Course
BS	Bachelor of Science
CBT	Combat Basic Training
DGDP	Directorate of Graduate Degree Programs
FM	Field Manual
FTX	Field Training Exercise
GDP	Graduate Degree Programs
GS	General Staff
MA	Military Academy
ME	Military Education
MOD	Ministry Of Defense
LT	Lieutenant
PKO	Peace Keeping Operations
PfP	Partnership for Peace
PT	Physical Training
SGA	Small Group Advisor
SMU	“Skënderbej” Military University

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"If you are planning for a year, sow rice; if you are planning for a decade, plant trees; if you are planning for a lifetime, educate people."

Chinese Proverb

Background

In the past, the training and education of the Albanian Armed Forces followed the communist military system. This model consisted of a common military curriculum, combined with subjects of general knowledge, and a heavy dose of indoctrination. After the fall of the communist system a drastic reduction in the armed forces followed. The number of officers needed was much smaller and their education did not adequately prepare them for the new environment. Unlike previous generations, officers couldn't remain in the army until retirement and their education did not prepare them for another career. The armed forces had been regarded as an instrument of the communist system and the people in general didn't like either the army or service in the army. The challenges were many, not only to create a new philosophy for education and training for cadets but also to prepare them for integration into society.

To address these challenges the military education system was changed to include only a military component, with the expectation that officers would, after commissioning, complete their education at civilian universities supported by the government. The unexpected result was that only a few could actually complete the civilian portion. This resulted in most officers being disillusioned by the military education system which failed to properly prepare them for integration into society.

In 2004, the Ministry of Defense directed a change to the officer education system at the Military University. The officer candidates would follow a mixed military and civilian program aimed to prepare good officers and valuable graduates. The military training was harmonized with academic semesters which increased the cost and the duration of the education (4 to 5 years), and the discussions about appropriateness. The first issue was if another bachelor's degree was needed for the young lieutenants or if it made it not only more expensive, but also made the selection more complicated. Additionally civilian degrees may not prepare officers adequately for a military career.

The question of officer education remains a contentious issue. Some hang on to the old model and are of the opinion that too much education is not good for a pragmatist officer. Others disagree and state that there can never be too much education; the real matter is if it is the appropriate one. The discussion continues and it remains to be resolved what the ideal education is.

In 2007 a new law was approved – “Law for Higher Education in Albania”¹. No one can say with certainty that the predisposition of the lawmakers was positive or negative regarding the Military University but the fact is this law did not mention military higher education. This implied that the Military University then operates outside the law. Even if another law for military education was approved by the parliament, it would not integrate military education with the national higher education system and would incur the risk that military professionalism will not be correctly evaluated.

The requirements of the Albanian Armed Forces (AAF) for future officers² can be adequately fulfilled by the Military University but at what cost? The selection process for officer candidates is restrictive and unnecessarily exclusive in that the criteria for age

(18-22) and educational credentials (management or electronics) greatly narrows the number of candidates available. The retention of cadets in the “Skënderbej” Military University (SMU) is still a matter of concern since besides the small amount of candidates who will join the SMU, (around 150 per year), some of them will fail to meet their academic goals and others will fail in the performance of military requirements. The attrition rate for each class at the Military University is around 40 percent. Because the total cost of education is borne by the AAF, the resulting financial loss is severe.

Transformation and reformation of AAF since the beginning of 1990s has resulted in a much smaller force. A smaller force requires highly trained, adaptable and flexible officer corps. Education is important not only to prepare them for their first assignment, but also to teach them flexibility to face complex situations, characteristic of today’s operating environment. This future officer corps may serve more time abroad than inside their country; accordingly they must be well rounded, broadly educated, culturally competent, professionals.

Another aspect of the transformation of the AAF is going from a draft conscripts system to a voluntary system. One of the needed requirements will be the quality of officers to lead, motivate and develop the professional. The infrastructure for recruiting is spread throughout Albanian and this can be leveraged for marketing and to increase the numbers and varieties of the officer candidate pool.

The existing system (Military University) successfully addressed the educational approach to officer education and officer acquisition, but considering the perspectives of quality, cost and adaptability, is it the most efficacious?

Primary Research Question

What is the appropriate system of education and training for Officer Candidates in the Albanian Armed Forces?

Secondary Research Questions

1. What is needed for training and education to prepare officers for their future in the military and for successful integration into society?
 - 1.1. Can we use as a comparative model the old military education system?
 - 1.2. What is required for the officers' future integration into society?
 - 1.3. What is the impact of today's officers' education in their future integration?
2. Does the new system prepare the right officer to lead troops and make decisions in the current operational environment?
 - 2.1. What is the role of an academic program in preparing the required future officers?
 - 2.2. What is the impact of military education and training program in SMU?
 - 2.3. What is the impact of leadership development programs in SMU?
3. Is the SMU the best system of officer education and training system, compared with previous or are there better alternatives?
 - 3.1. How relevant is the program with the educational and training goals?
 - 3.2. What is required to provide a modern educational methodology and adult learning process?
 - 3.3. Is the system cost efficient?
 - 3.4. Does the system provide the highest flexibility?

Significance

The purpose of this thesis is to provoke thoughts and discussions about the officer candidates' education system in Albania in light of a new role and modern warfare in the future operating environment.

Education is important to transmit the best values and abilities a society has created and also to shape the future. The cadets' education and training has a direct impact not only on the future of individuals, but on the future of the Albanian Armed Forces and the image of the country. A modern adult education will provide critical and creative thinking officers, able to adopt high moral and intellectual values, able to adapt themselves to the changing environment and to face future challenges. Their footsteps will be seen in their ability to cooperate and represent themselves and their country in important organizations, institutions and future operations. The alliances (e.g. NATO) allow small countries the possibility of achieving secure positions never before provided by their respective nations. To contribute, member countries need well educated representatives. A well-educated officer is needed to ensure that the intellectual dimension is integrated into the abilities to communicate effectively, to possess tactical proficiency and to be physically fit. The imperative is to provide an appropriate, attractive contemporary and affordable education. The officer must be well-versed in technical and tactical matters. The training has to develop his character, personal values and physical conditioning. In addition, the modern adult learning technique will provide a long-term, attractive and contemporary education, not only compatible with other national education institutions but more likely to achieve accreditation from agencies and from the public worldwide.

Assumptions

That the SMU will continue to operate outside the law of higher education and until another law for military education is approved or the existed one is modified. From the legal perspective there is room to modify the system.

The discussion will continue concerning the balance between education and training, and the old and other models will not allow the discussants to judge what the best way to train and educate the future officers is. The Military University has a high level of education but also a significant cost for our limited resources. With the limited number of students trained and educated (around 150) and officer production (nearly 60% of the input) it does not seem to be tenable.

The university level (Bachelor of Arts/Science Degree) will be the future prerequisite before candidates receive a promotion.

The SMU does not fulfill all the needs of the AAF and other candidates are to be recruited, educated and trained for transforming them into military leaders. This can be an experience that should be consolidated, improved and may be discussed as an alternative education system.

Definitions of Key Terms

The terms used throughout the study are expected to be familiar for military and nonmilitary readers.

Military Academy, Military University,

Undergraduate Program,

Graduate Degree, BA, BS,

Education,

Military Education,

Liberal Education

University, Higher Education,

Training,

Military Training, Field Training Exercise, Combat Basic Training

Leadership,

Leadership Competencies, Leadership Attributes, Leadership Quality

Standards, Training Standards, Performance Standards, Behavioral Standards

Limitations

The researcher's inability to travel to Albania for interviews and examine the curriculums and lesson plans limits the research. The best place to write this thesis is in Albania, being in touch with all the interested actors but the limited time and resource makes this impossible and the most challenging limitation. This is reinforced by the volumes of future and present strategies, curriculums and lesson plans. The communication will be limited to internet access as an option for discussing, interviewing and referring to key players and other actors regarding this issue.

Another limitation will be the willingness of key players to cooperate honestly if they know I'm going to use it for a master thesis here. They may only share the ideas they think will be welcomed here.

The English language makes it more difficult to read and write in addition to the demands of other classroom assignments.

Delimitations

The teaching and learning theories are very detailed and have been analyzed. I will not go into the philosophy of education. Officer candidates' education is a lifelong process that practically takes more than 1/3 of their time of service. This research will be limited only to candidates' officers and not in any post-commissioning officer education.

It will not be a recipe book for the interpretation of research materials but a perspective created from reasoning and critical thinking. I will try to limit myself to adult long term learning strategies to propose an effective educational program, transform military officers' education, and achieve our vision for the future Armed Forces leader.

¹ Qendra e Publikimeve Zyrtare: Ligj,Nr 9741 datë 21.05.2007 “*Për Arsimin e Lartë në Republikën e Shqipërisë*”, Fletorja Zyrtare: Viti 2007, Nr 68, Faqe 1917; Data e botimit: 16-06-2007, available also in internet from http://www.qpz.gov.al/results.jsp?simplequerystring=Ligj+9741+&any_all_exact=all accessed on 08/10/2008 (Note: This law is not the actual law according what act the SMU, but it is the actual Law for the Higher Education in Republic of Albania and there is no difference for the matters discussed here in the Law the SMU act, Low 8461, dt. 25.2.1999, Fletorja Zyrtare: Viti 1999, Nr 9, Faqe 273; Data e botimit: 16-03-1999)

² Note: The AAF manpower will be 14 500 (Source: Ms Zana Xhuka Deputy Minister of Defense, “Metropol” Newspaper, Tirana 26/04/2007 “*Shtesa në pension vetëm për pjesën e mbetur pas miratimit të ligjit*”)

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The subject of military education in the last century has been an important issue among military thinkers and writers. A large number of writings have been produced to offer strategy, doctrine, analysis, recommendations and opinions. This has been a topic discussed and written on in detail, providing the continuity in military thought as well as progressive education and training of officer candidates. While some authors have offered their perspectives in this matter, some pretend that military education is an oxymoron, while others see it as an integral part of the national education system.

During this research one of the first steps was operationalizing the key terms that will be used in the research. Selection of appropriate key words clears the understanding of how the research is going to be organized and makes clear the importance of being focused in the selection of relevant resources to limit the amount of sources available.

There are many resources such as literature (books, manuals, magazines, newspapers and other theses) and websites that provide different materials as a basis for study and reference. Literature will be divided into literature to be used for general information about military education and another block to be used to define the conceptual framework and models of capabilities and competencies required for the future environment. Another block will include the resources to be used for alternative models of education systems in different countries that can model our expectations.

The sources that provide the legal base for military and civil education in Albania are: “The Law of Higher Education in Republic of Albania”¹., “The Status of the Military University Skënderbej”², and “The Doctrine of Education and Training of Albanian

Armed Forces.”³ These will be used as the main resource documents for this thesis and this will provide the basis of official values and measurements established in the next chapter. The “Law of Higher Education” provides not only the requirements for bachelor’s level of education but also that SMU is not an integral part of the national education system. From the other perspective, the status of SMU makes everything seem like it is operating according to the law to provide a University Bachelor’s Level of education and to fulfill the Bologna Process requirements.⁴

Other resources will be the curricula and lesson plans used in different systems and in different times to define the values of the systems. Although they are important and of interest, it is not possible to analyze the quality of the practical implementation of these lesson plans and curricula so it will be assumed that all the goals and aims of the curricula and lesson plans are being accomplished. These lesson plans and curricula in part determine the quality of the soldiers from the different Albanian Military Education systems.

To increase the perspective of the writer, additional research was planned to be conducted through expert interviews. Later it was determined that interviews were not necessary, because at the end of 2007 some interviews were conducted in a form of a questionnaire, with five questions, addressed to each of the experts. Their answers are published in the official military newspaper “Ushtria”⁵ and official magazine “Mbrotjtja”⁶ These interviews are available published resources useful for the theses since the questions addressed the same issues considered by this research.

General Information Resources

The block-literature used for general information of military education consisted of books, magazines, newspapers and websites published recently. The most important books will be: *The Military Education: A Reference Handbook*⁷, *Military Education in a Democracy*⁸, *Military Education: Past, Present, and Future*.⁹

Cynthia A. Watson, in “The Military Education” tries to describe the military education of officers not only for military audiences but also for the general public. This makes the book very understandable for all interested individuals. She gives arguments and material to justify the impression that “professional officers in the U.S. system are arguably some of the better educated members of any profession in the country.” As a faculty member at the National War College and the National Defense University she provides the expertise to justify this idea for an education system which has required the participation and decision of the US Congress. From this perspective we have to take more seriously military education in Albania. It was tragic to separate it from the national education system just three years after the foundation of the Military University. In this book she describes curricula and specific institutions and provides contact information for them which can be used for later analysis.

Interestingly it has given rise to the debate about military education that “today is focused on whether it is as cost-effective as possible and whether it is appropriate to the types of crises that military officers will face in the future”. This emphasizes the importance of thinking about the cost of our system and this reinforces the author’s idea that the methodological system of education in AAF is more questionable than the quality.

The book also provides information about the various learning models such as the traditional academic learning, adult active learning, and distance learning. She persuasively defines what is successful education: in any venue to prepare creative thinkers. The common features and some important differences are elaborated and justified from the viewpoint of the special traits of military professionalism. Another measure was found for the quality in a system where rewards come from research. “Research rather than quality of teaching becomes the measure of a faculty member’s contribution to the institution.” The quality of instruction as well as the coherence and timeliness of the course curriculum is important in military education systems where the focus is on the quality of the product. What is noteworthy is the military’s tradition in studying the past actions to learn lessons; especially in preventing mistakes in the future. The tradition is worth adapting for Albania, - not to repeat the past mistakes but to avoid futures ones. Another important feature is the need for a robust Assessment Program to continually assess their curriculum, the quality of teaching, variety of techniques employed, and all other aspects of their programs. In military institutions of higher education, faculty should never ignore the results of student feedback on teaching or on any class. Another difference, no matter what the level of education, uniformed officers tend to want to become current, by emphasizing current issues, something else is excluded from the educational experience.

Students are encouraged to think creatively beyond their normal thought processes even in the face of the hierarchical decisions that might be current policy to the contrary; students and faculty of all types are protected by the peer pressure that the system imposes in a not-for-attribution system. The mix of faculty between tenured

civilian academic professors and uniformed officers, often junior, is another trait – actually a failure in SMU.

Professional education is reflective of the changes that have occurred in society. In the U.S. , the shift toward a more rigorous academic content from a greater emphasis on developing collegiality was a reflection of the transformation of warfare for the U.S. along with an acknowledgement of the growing complexity of the environment in the aftermath of the Cold War. Further, the reforms to the military education system, taken in the context of broader changes to the military’s role in providing national security to the nation, illustrated an understanding that the whole of the armed forces needed to change.

The answer to the question of why is education and training important for the military profession is an important argument to examine in this thesis. Professional military education, according to the author, is not the same as training or general education. Professional military education targets the fields which are crucial to the officer’s success in reaching the upper ranks of service. While training conveys a technical skill useful in accomplishing a particular task, education is intended to convey a thought process that can be applied in multiple circumstances. The education, through which the candidate officers pass, has the goal of educating students to apply their analyses through a series of possible situations.

Conceptual Framework Resources

Another block will be used to define the conceptual framework and models of capabilities and competencies required for the future environment.

The main focus will be first to identify the conceptual framework which will serve as a foundation for the analysis and synthesis in later chapters. This step is

important since the resources lack a consistent conceptual structure. Comparison of different models for determining the capabilities (skills) and competencies of officers will be conducted. There are a lot of models of these capabilities and competencies a future leader has to possess to fulfill his role and requirements. The primary resource for this analysis will be Army Leadership, FM 6-22¹⁰ and relevant materials published in Albania.

Army Leadership as the keystone leadership manual for the United States Army establishes leadership doctrine, the fundamental principles by which Army leaders act to accomplish their mission and care for their people. FM 6-22 combines the lessons of the past with important insights for the future to help developing competent leaders.

The writer of the theses can select as quality indicators subjects from a range of options from the attributes (what a leader does,) or core leader competencies (what a leader does.)

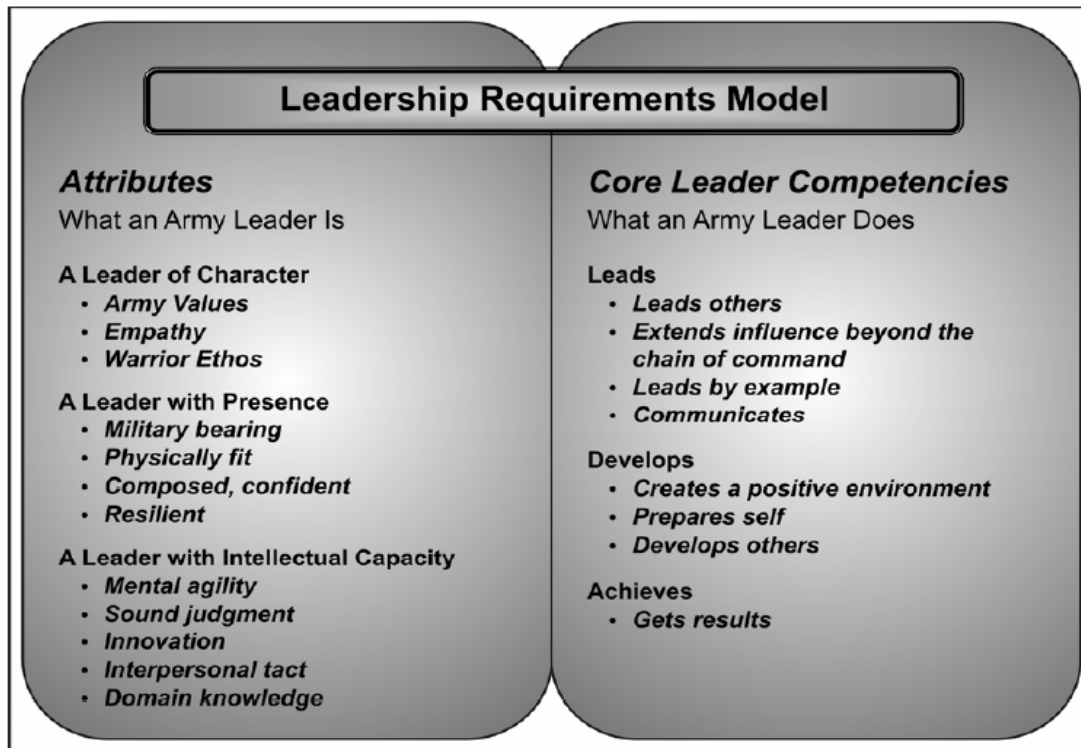


Figure 1. The Army leadership requirements model
Source: FM 6-22 (Washington DC Department of the Army, 12 Oct 2006, p. 2-4)

The leadership qualities will be measured by capabilities and competencies highlighted in this manual. Capabilities of being extraordinary feats, courage and sacrifice as they have proven on the battlefields have to be intertwined with great patience, persistence, and tremendous loyalty as they perform their duty to the Nation in thousands of orderly rooms, offices, motor pools, training areas and operation fields around the world, no matter how difficult, tedious, or risky is the task. The education has to provide the fundamental values and to create the basis for self-development. This will be analyzed in the following chapters according to the vision realized by information provided from this resource.

According to the manual, leaders must demonstrate competent, professional, and ethical leadership. The education has to develop leadership potential to provide the leader with a strong intellect, physical presence, professional competence, high moral character, and the ability to serve as a role model. An Army leader is able and willing to act decisively, within the intent and purpose of his superior leaders, and in the best interest of the organization.

FM 6-22 addresses the topics necessary to become a competent, multi-skilled leader. The definitions of leader and leadership provides the information on how to use the Army leadership requirements model as a common basis for thinking and learning about leadership and associated doctrine.

Other models, like Bloom's Taxonomy¹¹ will enhance the spectrum of understanding that is really important to be taught in military education institutions and to develop an alternative leadership model. Blooms' Taxonomy and the Army Leader Development model¹² will be used to judge the alternatives of the systems as a measure of learned intellectual skills and different levels of cognitive behavior.

Immanuel Kant's "Answer to the question: What is Enlightenment?"¹³ will provide a more philosophical base with the descriptions of the qualities needed not for a man to become "enlightened" but for a leader to be efficient.

Education Systems Models - Resources

Other literature will provide general information and alternative education systems and all this will be judged on the basis of the impact of primary documents to see what better fits for AAF. This block will include the resources to be used for alternative models of education systems in different countries.

Additional secondary resources will be other books and publications that analyze military education in the past, present and in the future. The public released magazines, newspapers and official websites will provide the information needed from Albania.

As resources for the past education system will serve not only my memory, but also newspaper “Ushtria”(“The Army”)¹⁴ and the magazine “Mbrotjtja” (“The Defense”¹⁵) evaluation and assessments reports¹⁶ and the interviews. This spectrum will be enlarged from the resources that provide information about other educational military systems in the past and in the present that can serve as models for comparison and to clarify the perspective of evaluation and analysis.

The literature will consist of books like Academia in Upheaval Origins, Transfers, and Transformations of the Communist Academic Regime in Russia and East Central Europe¹⁷, but the most updated information will be provided by official websites of different military education Academies and Universities¹⁸.

Military Education Past, Present and Future,¹⁹ Military Education in a Democracy²⁰, will broaden the knowledge spectrum of military education. Overall, there is a large amount of detailed literature on the subject of military education. During my research the analysis and my experiences will be instrumental in finding easier ways of moving towards our goal. Experiments are not necessary because other NATO armies have prepared the road and certified its efficiency.

Imperative is conducting a reading of resources and selecting the applicable concepts. Due to the overwhelming amount of literature, the risk of getting bogged down in aimless reading and running out of time is real. To mediate this risk, literature will be closely scrutinized to determine if it bears directly to the research question(s) under

consideration, thereby hopefully avoiding unnecessary readings. The amount of time required to complete the research is extremely limited, so readings will be focused to those that are relevant and timely. Of necessity, analysis will occur as readings and study are accomplished, updating findings as required. .

¹ Qendra e Publikimeve Zyrtare: Ligj,Nr 9741 “*Për Arsimin e Lartë në Republikën e Shqipërisë*”,

² Universiteti Ushtarak Skenderbej; *Statusi i Universitetit Ushtarak Skënderbej* SHBLU, Tirane 2005 pp 45

³ Ministria e Mbrojtjes. *Doktrina e Arsimimit dhe Stervitjes ne Forcat e Armatosura te Republikes se Shqiperise*, SHBLU Tirane pp 68

⁴ Notice: The Bologna Process aims to create a European Higher Education Area by 2010, in which students can choose from a wide and transparent range of high quality courses and benefit from smooth recognition procedures. More information is available in internet from the European Commission Education and Training Home Page from: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/bologna/bologna_en.html accessed an 2008-07-28

⁵ Gazeta “Ushtria” (“The Army” Albanian Armed Forces Official Main [weekly] Newspaper) available in internet from <http://www.mod.gov.al/botime/> accessed from 03/01/2008 till 10/29/2008

⁶ Revista “Mbrojtja” (“The Defense” Albanian Armed Forces Official Main [monthly] Magazine) available in internet from <http://www.mod.gov.al/botime/> accessed from 03/01/2008 till 11/03/2008

⁷ Cynthia Ann Watson, *Military Education: A Reference Handbook* (*Contemporary Military, Strategic, and Security Series*), Praeger Security International Academic Cloth, Westport USA, (February 28), 2007 pp 208

⁸ Judith Hicks Stiehm. *Military Education in a Democracy* US Army War College, Temple University Press; Philadelphia; 2002, pp.260

⁹ Gregory C Kennedy; Keith Neilson, *Military Education: Past, Present, and Future*, Praeger. Westport, Connecticut London; Publication Year: 2002, pp 239

¹⁰ Department of the Army, *FM 6-22 Army Leadership Competent, Confident, and Agile*, Washington DC, October 2006, pp 205

¹¹ A *Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching, and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, Abridged Edition*, (Allyn & Bacon; 2 edition (December 29, 2000) pp 336

¹² Kenneth G Haynes, *Transforming Junior Leader Development: Developing The Next Generation Of Pentathletes*, Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS 2007 (pp123), pp 21-24

¹³ Immanuel Kant .*An Answer to the Question: "What is Enlightenment?"* Konigsberg, Prussia, 30th September, 1784. available in internet from http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/documents/What_is_Enlightenment.pdf accessed 07/22/2008

¹⁴ Gazeta “Ushtria”

¹⁵ Revista “Mbrotja”

¹⁶ The Office Assessment Of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Affairs and the United States European Command, *The Republic of Albania – Defense Assessment*, (Washington DC: Office of the Secretary of Defense 2001)

¹⁷ Michael David-Fox, György Péteri, *Academia in Upheaval Origins, Transfers, and Transformations of the Communist Academic Regime in Russia and East Central Europe*, Bergin & Garvey, Westport, Connecticut London. 2000, pp352

¹⁸ The United States Military Academy Home Page, available from <http://www.usma.edu/>; The Royal Military College of Canada Home Page, available from <http://www.rmc.ca/>; The Royal Military Academy of Belgium Home Page, available from <http://www.rmc.ca/>;The Internet, Accessed from 04/01/2008 to 07/28/2008

¹⁹Gregory C. Kennedy And Keith Neilson, *Military Education Past, Present and Future*, pp. 239

²⁰Judith Hicks Stiehm, *Military Education in a Democracy*, pp. 260

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

General

This chapter provides an overview of the methodology used to collect, assess and evaluate the research information collected to answer the research question. This thesis utilizes a qualitative approach to answer the proposed research question: What is the appropriate education and training for Officer Candidates in the Albanian Armed Forces?

Methodology Process

Review of available literature and data was conducted prior to developing the research question. The primary resources were the Internet and the CARL Library. Relevant prior research was identified and used in this thesis as a starting point. Time constraints require a tight focus on relevant supporting material.

Redefining the problem and its scope is the most important step. After reading the literature the problem was restated and an additional outcome from the reading was the criteria value hierarchy which will be used for comparing the alternatives in later phases of research.¹ To increase the perspective of the writer, additional research will be conducted through expert interviews. These experts include the Rector, the Deans, the Commander of SMU, the Chief of the Education Branch, the Chief of the Military Science Department and students, officers, professors and faculty staff of the SMU interested in the research.

During this process the problem was redefined because the author had a preconceived solution in mind which affected the perceptions during the first statement of

the problem. The initial hypothesis of this research was that the existing system was the best for preparing officers for Albanian Armed Forces, and question on the balance between training and education to prepare officers. The vision at higher echelons was limited; the subject was not seen in its entirety and the problem was not acknowledged. The hypothesis was later revised for the system of training and education for officer candidates. The scope of the research was expanded to include an alternative education system model which is different from the past models or the existing one.

I have chosen the variables of quality, cost and adaptability to evaluate the educational systems.

Defining the quality and its measurement is difficult since it is a subjective matter. However, it can be measured by acceptable criteria of degree offered, education type and upgraded methodologies implemented.

The university degree or a fully accredited diploma in the national and European system is one of the main criteria for a qualitative and valid education.

Liberal Education is an approach to learning that empowers individuals and prepares them to deal with complexity, diversity, and change. It provides students with broad knowledge of the wider world (e.g. science, culture, and society) as well as in-depth study in a specific area of interest. A liberal education helps students develop a sense of social responsibility, as well as strong and transferable intellectual and practical skills such as communication, analytical and problem-solving skills, and a demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and skills in real-world settings.²

A liberal education will produce graduates that are mentally agile, able to adapt, think critically and creatively, communicate effectively and to reason ethically. This education will provide future leaders with the required quantitative literacy skills to solve

the problems “dealing with real, unpredictable, and unorganized situations where the first task is to organize the information and only then to calculate to find an answer,”³ in a rapidly changing environment.

A deeper immersion in liberal education will support military leaders with a wider understanding of the cultures, technology and sciences, foreign languages, (military) history, competencies and intellect to act in certain and uncertain situations, to make decisions and to effectively lead.

An upgraded, modern and prestigious education which includes the effective andragogy, faculty qualification, learner-teacher ratio and the approach of delivering instructions can serve as another measure. There always exist opportunities for improvement in methodologies that enhance the learning outcome. Having implemented the most effective methods is an obligation and is indicative of quality. The qualitative education has a positive impact on developing self-directed and life-long learners as well as enhancing the stature of the institutions.

I define cost as the amounts of money spent in the educational process, living expenses and organizational cost.

The cost of the education process includes the additional cost of providing adequate educational materials, books, learning facilities, and didactical materials.

The cost of living comprises the cost of accommodation, nutrition, entertainment and sustainment; the cost for equipment (e.g. computers) and adequate educational materials.

Cost of organization is primarily related with the number and spending for staff and with the learner-teacher ratio. This cost is to provide the indispensable staff and

academic faculty, and the appropriate academic support. In addition of the cost is the expenditure for military equipments and uniforms.

I define adaptability as flexibility in completing the AAF needs within a short period of time and the opportunity to implement changes in the study programs and methodology to create the required product.

Adaptability will have as criteria the flexibility of the system in the time required for producing officers and the ability to adapt and implement changes required from evolving situations. The ability of preparing leaders able to make innovative decisions and solutions, using intellectual flexibility and ability for life long learning is related more to the quality than adaptability. It seems that criteria's are not independent but they are interrelated or interdependent.

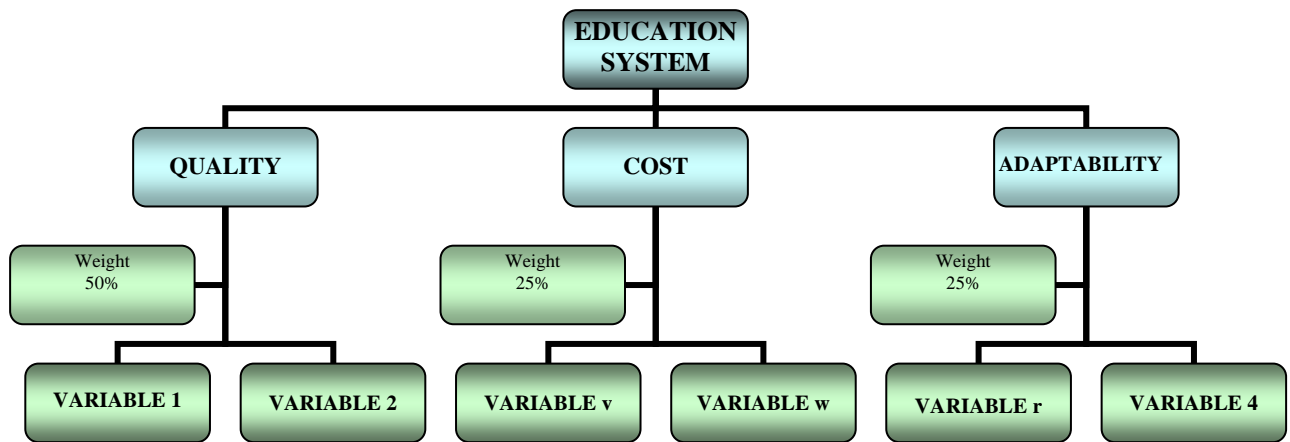


Figure 2. The Value Hierarchy Model

Source: *Created by author*

Because it is likely that not all values are equal in defining the system, each value also has a specific weight. The weight defines how important each value is relative to the

other variables, as well as the education systems. All values of the variables are important but the quality remains the main focus since the quality will define the future of AAF. I have to weigh these variables because quality is more important than other variables. So it is going to have double the weight compared to cost and adaptability.

Table 1. Evaluation of Alternatives

ALTERNATIVES OF OFFICERS CANDIDATES' EDUCATION SYSTEM	EVALUATION CRITERIA									RESULT
	X (Quality)			Y (Cost)			Z (Adaptability)			
	Evaluation	Weight	Score	Evaluation	Weight	Score	Evaluation	Weight	Score	
First	(2)	2	(4)	(1)	1	(1)	(1)	1	(1)	6
Second	(2)	2	(4)	(0)	1	(0)	(1)	1	(1)	5
Third	(2)	2	(4)	(2)	1	(2)	(1)	1	(1)	7

Source: Created by author

Development of measures and weights for all criteria will be used to evaluate systems, to develop alternatives and recommendations that will be discussed in the fourth and fifth chapters.

The best alternative will be the one that has the highest result between all the systems. Alternatives must be distinguishable from one-another. They will be compared to the present system as a baseline. After all the alternatives are examined carefully and compared the highest-scoring alternative will serve as the recommended solution.

Alternative systems must be generated to solve identified problems

The three variables considered are quality, cost, and adaptability. Quality is the most important value because of unpredictable future conditions and requirements. Cost is included because of the limited resources available. Adaptability is an important feature in a small army that is in perpetual transformation and reformation.

Before beginning analysis it is necessary to determine the criteria of a capable and competent officer and what are the standards of an effective education system. The standards or criteria for evaluation were defined by the quality of the officers a system can produce, the cost to produce the officers and the adaptability in terms of time and AAF needs of the systems, represented by a hierarchy with quality at the top.

Introduction

Chapter 1 will be explanatorily in nature introducing and framing this research.

Literature Review

Chapter 2 introduced the literature which provides different works that already exist as a basis for study and reference. Literature will be divided into literature to be used for general information about military education and another component to be used to define the conceptual framework and models of capabilities and competencies required for the future environment. Another area will include the resources to be used for alternative models of education systems from different countries. Another source of primary documents for this thesis are: Law of High Level Education in Republic of Albania, Doctrine of Education and Training of Albanian Armed Forces, and the Status of SMU.

The main focus will be to first identify the conceptual framework which will serve as a foundation for the analysis and synthesis in later chapters. This step is important since there was no unequivocal conceptual structure found in the literature review. Next comparison of different models for determining the capabilities (skills) and competencies of officers will be conducted. There are many models of the capabilities and competencies a future leader has to possess to fulfill his role and requirements. Criteria for this analysis will be primarily (Army Leadership) FM6-22 and relevant materials published in Albania. Other models, like Bloom's Taxonomy broaden and deepen the level of enlarge the spectrum of understanding that is important in military education institutions and to develop an alternative leadership model.

Blooms' Taxonomy and the Army Leader Development model⁴ will be used to judge the merits of the systems as a measure of learned intellectual skills and different levels of thinking behavior.

Other literature will provide general information and alternative views of educational systems and will be judged based on the impact of primary documents to determine feasibility for the AAF.

Methodology

Chapter 3 will describe the methodology process, the tools and techniques required to address the primary question. During this process, critical elements of judging the quality, cost and adaptability and efficiency will be identified. The best system will be identified based on the analysis and relationships of variables.

Analysis and Synthesis

Chapter 4 will assesses all the literature and resources with the intention of ultimately answering each of the research questions.

To answer each of the secondary questions it is necessary to examine and synthesize the separate elements of second and third level inquiry. The findings of secondary questions will be summarized for each respective question. At the end of the chapter, the analysis and comparison of the different models used in AAF to educate and train officers, and the capabilities and competencies identified will be judged based on the variables of quality, cost and adaptability. Recommendations will be made on the basis of this comparison.

Recommendations

Chapter 5 will include the summary of analytical research results and recommendations generated during the synthesis in the previous chapters. Recommendations will be addressed clearly and in concert with the short term aim to provoke discussion and thought. The overarching goal is to identify how officer (initial) education in the AAF can be improved for the twenty first century.

¹ USMA, *Analysis of the Research and Studies Program at the USMA*, West Point, New York, Sept 2004 p.6

² The Association of American Colleges and Universities *What is Liberal Education?* Home Page available from: http://www.aacu.org/press_room/what_is_liberal_education.cfm accessed 11/16/2008

³ C. J. Shroll, *National Coalition for Advanced Manufacturing*, available in internet from: <http://www.stolaf.edu/other/ql/intv.html#Shroll>, accessed 11/15/2008

⁴ Kenneth G Haynes., *Transforming Junior Leader Development: Developing The Next Generation Of Pentathletes*, p 21-24

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS

Can we Use as a Comparative Model the Old Military Education System?

The foundation of every state is the education of its youth.
Diogenes

Officer professional education has existed in Albania since Second World War (WWII). Before that time the officers of the Albanian Kingdom were trained and educated in other western countries, mainly in Italy. After WWII (Military) Officer Schools were established according to services and branches. The curriculums of studies in these schools depended on the armed forces' needs and requirements. They were mostly practically oriented and durations varied between two or three years until 1948.¹ Since that year the intermediate and advanced level of officers education was done in other countries primarily, in the Soviet Union. The officers were trained in these academies after being equipped with the experiences as soldiers in the National Liberation Army during WWII (the last years of the war known as partisans under the command of the Albanian Communist Party). These officers later established and developed the military schools system according to the services, using their experience and education, which later evolved into one academy (known as Military Joint Officer School).

The need for military professional education was satisfied by the Army, Air Force and Naval Academies where most officers received their commissions.² Because of the previous need for a large army (compared with the population) many were commissioned after a selection process from either qualified conscripts or from university graduates who were seeking a military career. The cadets in military schools were educated and trained to fulfill their later obligations as young officers. Depending on the branches the curriculums were essentially

differentiated. All the military training and education for young officers was accomplished in these schools, such as general knowledge, humanities, social sciences and natural sciences and continuing with general and special subjects depending on the branch and specialty. This level was appropriate to train not only recruits but also well educated reservists who had to serve in the service for fourteen days per year. The curriculum depended on the needs of the branch. In fact some branches, for example engineer, artillery or communication required so much academics, that it had a negative impact on practical training.

After WWII the good reputation of the officers after WW2 went down. The candidates, who applied for this profession were people who lived in rural areas where there was no other possibility to receive a college education. In the intervening years there were efforts to persuade or force people into the schools, but with very limited success. The communist system was really not interested in having a strong military elite and frequently cleansed the officer corps resulting in the best officers or non-conformists being forced out. This education was characterized by heavy doses of ideology and propaganda. Although debatable, this resulted in their civilian counterparts seemingly being better educated. During this time, the professional officers had to serve until full retirement and accordingly were not required to pursue any further education. There was no expectation of a civilian profession after military retirement.

This system worked until early 1990 when the communist system failed and a difficult transition process began. During this time the armed forces were seen as a tool of the communist system and the young people were loath to join the army, not only because of the sacrifices of a soldier's life but also because of the conditions of compensation and education.

To modify the armed forces in 1993 the Albanian Ministry of Defense shut down all military academies and mandated a systematic effort to revise and adapt the education system.

The training and education of AAF personnel and specially the system of officer's education has been designated a high priority since the first phase of Albania's defense reforms. But due to reductions in the size of the AF, there was a surplus of officers. The fact that many officers retired early is an indictment of the past system.

In 1995-1996 these Academies were re-opened with a modified three year education program. They adapted a new structure and philosophy of education and they created a new curriculum, however the staff was not properly prepared to implement the new system and this proved to be a failure. The military academies focused exclusively on military core knowledge to the exclusion of other academics, leaving open the possibility for military sponsored civilian education at a later date. This civil education proved to be very expensive and only a few would have the opportunity or were able to undertake the academic challenges. After finishing their education (or failure to finish) many officers did not return to the military. Real sanctions for academic failures or refusal to join the AF began to apply only later (at the end beginning of 2005).³.

Retention of cadets and new officers in the AAF became a serious problem. The attrition rate for each class at the Military Academy is at least 30 percent, and often as high as 50 percent.⁴ The desertion of many new officers upon graduation was alarming, because these new officers simply left the service without any apparent repercussions. This resulted in an unacceptable waste of limited resources and in fact complicated the matter of lack of contemporary education for military professional officers.

Viewed from a purely practical sense, an education from the Military Academy was unattractive since after three years a person would have a commission but not a bachelor's degree. As it is currently structured, some officers can accept early retirement after only 15

years, with a majority after 21-23 years. This would obviously allow an individual to pursue a second career. Because a purely military education had few civilian applications, retired officers faced a problem integrating into society. Additionally the reforms were inadequate because the reform makers “could not escape from the legacy of the long period under a totalitarian-communist regime.”⁵ For the reform to be effective and efficient it must be accomplished after a clear determination of exact criteria and the right methodology to realize this reform and this was missed.

“Because the military education system remained under the influence of old harmful tradition in which officers concentrate more on narrow technical knowledge than on future requirements” the military education concept was more a refining of the old system without changing the essence of it. The reform failed to produce a sound education’s concept and to identify the new requirements and how to meet them.⁶

At the beginning of 2000 it was realized that the existing system failed to fulfill expectations. The previous system could not be adapted any more because of the new role and career of the officer, retirement possibilities and the future requirements. It was at this point that discussions began about a new philosophy, concept and system which resulted in establishing a Military University. The question from this moment has been: Does the new system prepare the right officer to lead troops and make decisions on the battlefield?

Summary

The old education model was politically influenced by the communist regime and served to prepare officers for another role in another army. The skills and competencies were not relevant in view of the future challenging environment.

The previous officer school under the communist regime created the system to educate their youth and their future generation of military leaders. Their foundation, its youth education⁷ was built for an isolated dictatorial system; this foundation failed to properly prepare future military leaders for a democratic integrated society. For this reason this old model will not be subject to further examination.

The military academy system of education will be mentioned and analyzed again although it is obsolete and not suitable for the transformed, modernized, and smaller Armed Forces (AF).

What is Needed from Military Education to Prepare Officers for Their Future in the Military?

The function of education, therefore, is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. But education which stops with efficiency may prove the greatest menace to society. The most dangerous criminal may be the man gifted with reason, but with no morals... We must remember that intelligence is not enough. Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education. The complete education gives one not only power of concentration, but worthy objectives upon which to concentrate...

Martin Luther King Jr.⁸

The unpredictable global, regional and national security environment will require capable institutions and competent leaders to address future challenges. The Republic of Albania now finds itself a more secure NATO member country, standing between eastern and western civilizations. The future environment will be unpredictable at the personal, social, national or multinational levels. Unknown future challenges limit formulaic preparation of potential officers, but it is certain that the forthcoming situations will require virtuous officers to serve and protect the national interests and values, and to act properly in international environment and institutions.

It is difficult to decide today's educational goals or a curriculum's content for education and training of officer candidates in AAF focused to meet future needs. The goals and curricula's

content are to be derived from the needs of the Armed Forces and the higher education standards to provide the officer candidates with the skills and knowledge to fulfill changing future requirements.

The basis for determining what the AAF will require from the future officers is offered by “the National Security Strategy,” “Defense Policy,” “Military Strategy,” Ministry of Defense (MOD) and General Staff (GS) guidance and a general evaluation of future demands in various operational environments.

Future leaders will face broad and conceptual problems that will require the ability to recognize them clearly and make sound decisions to form proper solutions. “Critical reasoning is key to understanding situations, finding causes, arriving at justifiable conclusions, making good judgments, and learning from experience—in short, problem solving.”⁹

In contrast with the past, NATO integration and the actual transformation process require supplementary abilities to become integrated and interoperable with other NATO forces. “The Albanian Armed Forces must be fully capable of operating in a wide range of complex combined and joint scenarios in concert with the military forces of NATO and other coalition partners.”¹⁰ This will broaden the spectrum of knowledge required and the skills that institutions of education and training must provide. The future requirements for the leadership perspective will exceed those of the past and it will be necessary to provide a better education to produce adequate leaders from the same source.

The system of education, the study and training offered in educational institutions, must be able to cultivate good critical thinking skills to develop candidates’ leadership potential to improve their character attributes; and to provide the necessary technical skills for future necessities. The leadership requirements, attributes and competencies will be the main pillar of

present and future education although there are many versions of the right attributes and competencies. The education in leadership matters will be the center of the vision, concept and intent of the educational institutions to equip the officer candidate with most of the qualities which “great successful leaders have evinced: professional competence, human understanding, and strong character.”¹¹ Education must encourage the officer candidates to make their values part of their own character. To respond to the dynamic and unpredictable security environment, education in leadership fundamentals is the cornerstone to lead or follow. Providing the features of character, personal values together with the wisdom to know what is right in an ethical dilemma, will provide the courage and commitment to act accordingly.

The future will demand flexibility in action and interaction, accuracy in understanding, visualizing and perception, and clear concise communication. To succeed future officers have to understand human behavior and remain a creative and critical thinker able to motivate and influence by their prudent words and their decisive actions.

The institutions of education have to offer the intellectual foundation to provide leaders the abilities to think and act creatively and critically, to be aware of ethical considerations, to be effective communicators and to pursue progressive intellectual development. It must provide this in parallel with proficiency in professional technical knowledge, and understanding of human behavior.

The qualities required of the officer are numerous. It takes an amalgam of qualities to make an effective officer and the overall mix of the qualities is very much dependant on the role which the officer is expected to play. Sometimes, these qualities will be inherent but, more often they will form and develop over years of experience and training. Selection of officer candidates

must look more for potential and trainability rather than raw, undeveloped qualities. “Finally, the good officer in our world's society is a rare breed ... and that is rightly and essentially so.”¹²

Another challenge will be to prepare flexible professionals able to use modern technology, to select and use the right information. They will be called to face and accomplish not only the unknown missions but also to seek for self-development and to update and expand their knowledge. The curriculum’s attention may not be focused on preparing the candidates for certain situations but must attempt a broader education so they can anticipate and respond effectively to all types of challenges that will arise in the national, regional or global arena.¹³

The increasing reliance on technology makes dealing with the future requirements more challenging, because “smart weapons require smart soldiers” and the education has to provide more technical expertise. “The future will need leaders who use their brain, deal with diversity of people and cultures who can tolerate ambiguity, take initiative, and ask questions, even to the point of questioning authority”. The willingness to ask and think may be more prevalent in the Armed Forces than in many businesses.¹⁴ In this framework study programs should focus not on accumulating large mass of information, but instead needs to emphasize life-long learning and self direction to adapt in the environments’ we can predict only poorly today.¹⁵

The amount of information and knowledge today is massive and education can provide balance to give them the most important without overwhelming them under an intellectual burden. “There is no question but that the increasing load of human knowledge and experience imposes added burdens upon leaders in all walks of, modern life, but I doubt that in any: profession, technology is exercising greater pressure than in the military.”¹⁶ Our limited ability to plan, produce and use weapons not yet developed does not make it impossible for the enemy to have them or for us later to possess in the future.¹⁷ This requires upgrading and changing the

level of knowledge education provides in the field of technology, in the areas of science, mathematic, with a focus on information technology.

The military education institutions can not prepare experts in all these fields but in the future none of our military leaders can afford to be a leader without some rudimentary understanding of science and technology. Visualization will be incomplete without the ability to note the “effects of new weapons and to pattern tactics.” Comprehension of the language of science will increase their chances for self-development, their mental flexibility in decision-making, in decisively employing the equipment and applying tactics and techniques.¹⁸

AAF as an institution in a small country will necessarily be small. To represent the country, officers have to adapt and demonstrate values in general and professional subjects. A leader’s knowledge can never be enough for him to be a scientist, a manager, administrator or a diplomat, but according to future operational environments, he must be able to lead based on the understanding of cultures, history, government, economics, politics, psychology etc..

Intellect is still not enough for an efficient leader. They will need to influence people by providing purpose and vision, direction and motivation; and to improve themselves and their followers.¹⁹

Summary:

Today’s education aims to prepare people who will serve in a 15-25 year career. The required characteristics of military leaders will be significantly different than they are today. Reductions because of reorganization, resource constraints or technology implementation will result in fewer military personnel. Leaders will have to be flexible enough to perform in different assignments as they advance faster through the ranks. The attributes and capabilities required for the future include all those required in the past but they continue to expand. A wide spectrum of

missions, modern technologies, complex environments and changing situations will require flexibility to think and adapt, awareness and judgment to make decisions. Additionally, self-direction and self development will exclude the possibility of possessing only obsolete knowledge. In this context one must conclude that university level education is the most appropriate for undergraduate education. Later the appropriateness of the system for service in the AF and for integration into the civil society will be considered.

What is Required for the Officers' Future Integration into Society?

Civil-military relations require the AAF to be under democratic civilian control, as they are today in Albania, but active participation of ex-military contingents in democratic issues is desirable. The stark fact is that retired officers of AAF are under represented not only in politics, but also in public administration as compared with other professions. This has created the impression in military personnel that their valuable experiences and contributions are not appreciated and their sacrifices are forgotten. The officers lacked an adequate educational background and the civilian leadership lacks the experience to handle their integration resulting in decreased reciprocal trust. The challenge of the integration process became a factor in increasing the gap and increasing the risk of detrimental military civil relationships.

Education is fundamental for integration because it will help retired officers find employment and provide the right social status without any assistance from the government. However, integration, of one of the most dedicated social groups with the responsibility of securing the national interest is an obligation of the government. Reserve and retired officers may receive extra supplements for their noble service to the nation, but this does not mean they are successfully integrated into society.

The author is not exploring civil military relationships further, as it is not the focus of this paper but will go deeper into education required as an important factor of retired officers' integration into society.

What is the Impact of Officers' Education in their Future Integration into Society?

The AAF law regarding ranks and career stipulates that an officer can retire if he is no longer eligible for promotion to a higher rank²⁰. That means that even if officers are of the highest quality, some of them will have to leave the armed forces because of the limited numbers of positions at higher ranks. At the age of 47 most officers can take early retirement compensation, which unfortunately is not enough for either normal living or for an acceptable social status. Most of the officers will retire even earlier, after 15-18 years of service, at approximately the age 40. For someone age 40 another job is a basic necessity to maintain a decent standard of living. Because of the dynamic life the officer led during their service they are generally in good physical health, even at full retirement age. After someone separates and goes into the reserves or retires early from the service, he faces a drastic drop in income, has minimal employment opportunities and a blow dent in his already diluted status and dignity.²¹

Because of the national problems with unemployment, the prospect of finding a job other than self-employment or lower status jobs is almost non-existent. Currently, early retirement is usually regarded as a lack of ability to progress in a military career. The employment opportunities are reduced, since no one wants to take the risk of either hiring unsuccessful people or those not well-educated. Being well-educated is a relative concept, but the officers trained during communism were prepared to serve in the military until their full retirement age. As explained before, the education for political consideration was not considered equivalent to other higher educational institutions, and after the drastic reduction of the armed forces, many officers

were not educated or trained for an alternative career. This had a significant impact in the officer corps and in the reputation of the military profession. Later, the transformation of education did not change the situation, as the military academy (MA) could not provide a university level of education although it was one of the priorities in defense reform. The other candidates were also trained only for their military service and this did not serve well the military profession's reputation or recruiting. This orientation of the MA towards training made the academy unattractive to the best candidates who aspired to a challenging education.²²

The impact was much worse for their social reputation as the officers were left without a quality education. Without academic preparation for later integration into civil life, the military profession lost status in the public eye. Many young men and women preferred not to join the military profession simply because of their status after retirement and their lack of preparation for their future.

Government did not make any effort to “recognize the need to utilize this trained and disciplined reservoir of human resource and rehabilitate them” after they went out of circulation.²³ The public administration field did not prefer them because of their specialized education and their partiality, - not sure they were suited to perform these jobs. From the perspective of the management profession, they lacked the personal and general public confidence because of their education, regardless of their previous experiences and performances in leadership positions or positions of responsibility. In this framework, education emerged as a precondition for successful integration of retired officers into society.

NATO membership required different steps not only in the structure of the AAF but also in providing resources for modernization, treatment, payment and quality of education and training in the AAF.²⁴ A new strategy has been implemented providing resources, primarily

financial resources, and social-psychological support for active, reserve and retired officers. The laws or amendments approved focused on financial help and treatment for reintegration. Some new laws were enacted only with early retirement payment but because of lack of political will it is not yet implemented, and no steps were taken to affect positively the status and dignity of retired officers. Other problems and political priorities did not allow the government or the MOD to concentrate on this issue although the recommendations from European Union or NATO have established the importance of retired military personnel issues and their right of redress.

Albania did not inherit a system to support and integrate retired officers into civil life and society. Integration or reintegration now is seen as an obligation to make them socially active and contributors to economic power instead of consuming it by financial support in transition or early retirement pensions.²⁵ The university level of education will make it easier to fulfill this demand because it will completely change the framework.

The best way to express the genuine concern of the nation and good intention of the government is to provide the best education which combined with their discipline, willpower, leadership and management experience in military units, will make retired officers a valuable and desirable resource for civil servant administration positions and for private business. This issue can be alleviated in part by university level education and their graduation in management of electronics will help the AAF and the individuals to mediate the problems identified above resulting from their early or full retirement.

A university level degree providing education will provide the means and the opportunities. Long term, the university level education is the key which could open opportunities and provide more employment possibilities with higher social status. The education will offer future officers with not only an equivalent degree of other civil universities but with

additional leadership education, training and experience that their peers in civilian universities will not be afforded. This positively influences the reputation of military professionals and it will make them a useful and important member of society. The end result effect will be a properly educated officer corps, marketable education, past retirement employment opportunities and remarkable officers.

The law made it possible for officers to plan their careers with a degree of certainty; they can decide when they will go into the reserves or retirement and they can plan accordingly for their future. Their relationships created in the university will create possibilities for receiving recommendations for employment.

It would be incomplete to examine the Military University without considering the fact that officer candidates have limited choices there. Officer candidates do not have the option of choosing degrees/fields according to their preferences and future perspectives before or after joining the armed forces. This will have a harmful effect on the quality of recruiting and selection, which will be analyzed later.

An alternative system may be one that does not provide the education for their future in civilian life but recruits students who already are studying in civilian universities. Their military education, training and preparation for commissioning after their graduation would be the responsibility of the military in this alternative system. In this perspective, if the recruiting is done after their enrollment in civil universities we could preserve the university level education and enlarge the basis for recruiting. In addition, a broader spectrum of different degrees can be realized, as well as exposure to different professions and social groups.

Summary

The military university level of education is necessary for service in the military profession and as a precondition for later integration into society. This level of education can be provided by the Military University within a very restricted range as it can provide only two choices or it may be offered by other universities with a greater range of degree choices.

Does the New System Prepare the Right Officer to Lead Troops and Make Decisions in the Operational Environment?

The need to teach Soldiers and leaders how to think rather than what to think has never been clearer. To defeat adaptive enemies, we must out-think them in order to out-fight them.

Les Brownlee and Peter J. Schoomaker²⁶

The SMU is responsible for education and training future officers to prepare them to lead their units to recognize and solve complex problems to accomplish future requirements. SMU is an education and training institution. The curriculum and the daily activity requires SMU to harmonize education with training so that they are mutually beneficial. “Meeting the needs in training and education” is as important as providing the “balance in training for certainty with education for uncertainty”²⁷.

The final product of SMU is military leaders equipped with the attributes, competencies and skills demanded by the operational environment. In this part the author will go through the education and training in the SMU. The author will not analyze the academic part of the education as it is the same program (taken from other universities) and completes the same academic goals as other civil universities. Also, the author will not analyze the quality of the study program implementation since this is not the object covered in this thesis. The author will

concentrate on how the SMU prepares officers to lead troops and make decisions in the operational environment.

University level education is the only appropriate level of study for officers. The university level is necessary to prepare AAF officers based on the future leadership requirements and models of other NATO members. Education is life long and it needs to respond and adapt to the actual and expected changes in security, cultural and technological environment. SMU has a new modern approach to education which will provide the required education for future officers.

However improvements are possible by modifying or finding more efficient alternative systems. Before getting into the alternative matter, one should analyze the ability of this education to provide the officer candidates with the abilities, skills, attributes and competencies needed for the expected operational environment.

SMU was the result of years of efforts to reform the military education system in Albania which created the mechanism to accommodate the educational preferences of officer candidates. This university was founded using the framework of some of the best western schools like the U.S. Army Military Academy (West Point) in the U.S. and the Military Academy of Modena in Italy, both of which have successfully combined the academic program with military education and training.²⁸ This step addressed the intellectual, civil and professional gap seen in the previous systems of military education in Albania.²⁹

The improvement of the military academy to university level status made the officers' education compatible with similar systems in NATO member countries. This level of education is the basis for development of a qualified, highly capable and motivated officer corps. It supports the National Military Strategy and is an integral part of AAF reform and modernization of training and education. This system is able to develop a military professional officer who is

properly educated and skillfully trained, capable of meeting the future challenges of the AAF, to produce officers interoperable with NATO and Partnership for Peace (PfP) countries, to provide a challenging and stable career and to prepare them better for easier integration into society after retirement.

The temporary results (last year) were so good just three years after the establishment of SMU that some of the key players enthusiastically declared: “I’m, convinced, and may say that its (SMU) creation was one of the greatest achievements in the field of new officers training and education reformation, and our entire (Albanian) AF.”³⁰ ...The first Military University in our country (Albania) in 2004 is certainly the greatest event in the Albanian higher military education history.”³¹ The graduates of this university will be able to respond to the demands of the operational environment or successfully integrate with other partners in joint or combined operations in the war against terrorism.³²

The SMU as a higher institution of education builds strong intellectual foundations to provide leaders with the requisite abilities and skills. Generally speaking, SMU offers everything that other universities offer but the mission and the spectrum of knowledge are expanded with military art and science, foreign languages, physical and military training and general cultural awareness. The distribution between academic and military programs is 80% and 20% respectively, which makes the educational burden of SMU students to be closer to 130% compared with students from other civil universities³³. This makes the selection more competitive and viable but also improves the quality of the SMU students who in return have better employment opportunities after release from the military.

The Curriculum inculcates ethical, moral, and cultural awareness through emphasis on leadership, management, planning, decision making, culture, history, human behavior, mathematics, science, information technology, military skills, physical training, and sports.³⁴

Leadership development is realized through education and training as one mixed process that makes progress that is exercised in everyday duties and situations, academic classes or training. Officer candidates will be educated through a sound academic curriculum and will gain a university degree that today is accepted nationally and, after meeting the requirements of the Bologna Process, will be well positioned for future international accreditation.

The programs for the undergraduate level education according to the Bologna Process and Albanian Law require that 180 credits be completed in three academic years.³⁵ In SMU the undergraduate program is four academic years and achieves 240 credits. There are 32 credits allocated for military art and science and 16 for English language. (Military training, six weeks each year, is not accredited and included here.)³⁶

Today's volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous global environment makes the AF officer's duty extremely challenging. In order to meet that challenge, future leaders must constantly improve their skills, increasing their knowledge about the issues involved with leading at different levels required to meet challenges as leaders in tomorrow's world.³⁷

The education and training is realized by harmonizing the academic program (executed in two academic semesters every academic year) and with training experience (created from Fall Field Trainings). This is combined with Leadership Development Process in the every day military life of Student Corps.³⁸

Education prepares individuals for service by teaching skills, knowledge, and behaviors applicable to multiple duty positions in peace or war. Educated Soldiers and civilians have the foundation needed to be able to adapt to new and unfamiliar situations.

Education is associated with “how to think.” It provides individuals with lifelong abilities that enable higher cognitive thought processes. Education prepares individuals for service by teaching skills, knowledge, and behaviors applicable to multiple duty positions in peace or war. Educated Soldiers ... have the foundation needed to be able to adapt to new and unfamiliar situations.

FM 7-0³⁹

The academic program provides scholastic knowledge and common military education that will provide an appreciation for military doctrine in leadership and war-fighting. All officer candidates will receive a Bachelor of Art (for management students) or Bachelor of Science degree (for electronics students), which is designed specifically to meet the intellectual requirements and is a precondition for their commissioning. The academic program is focused on their graduation and directly and indirectly will affect their future performance. This degree program will provide a valuable diploma in a BA in management or BS in electronics.

This level of education will affect indirectly the quality of the new officers by providing them the abilities to think and act creatively and critically, to be aware of ethical considerations, to be an effective communicator and to pursue progressive intellectual development. In addition, they will demonstrate proficiency in professional technical knowledge, math and informatics, human behavior and leadership.

Leadership development is a process integrated into every day military life and all activities in the Student Corps. For 24 hours per day and 6 days per week students are organized into and act as a military organization, where the leadership is developed by assigning students to leadership positions, giving them responsibility. Someone from the Officer or NCO staff will be present to mentor, coach and assess them according to the potential displayed and the results achieved in their assigned positions.

The Quality of the Future Officers

Success comes from well-trained leaders who are educated for judgment and able to adapt to evolving requirements and apply critical reasoning and creative thinking to respond to complex, ambiguous problems... Those educated to adapt will succeed through careful execution of trained tasks, but they must also be able to identify unique problems as departures from those studied and respond by designing and implementing unique solutions for the new problems.⁴⁰

The intent was for the Military University to provide a solution for the desired quality of future officers and to meet the needs of AAF. The SMU is preparing tomorrow's officer with programs aimed to provide them broad cultural horizons and the full range of military knowledge. This will prepare them for military service and will help ensure that they are competitive in the civilian market and society after their retirement. Although the quality required for the future seems to be provided, some issues arise with the Military University from different areas. The discussions and issues were focused on providing the highest quality possible, for the lowest cost with the uppermost flexibility.

Quality was the main issue since the major proportion of the studies in the Military University is dedicated to pure academic, non-military related topics. The contention was, is there too much academics compared with the required practical approach of officer preparation. Noteworthy is that during communism, military students were not happy with the relationship of military system of education in national higher education. This matter is definitely addressed since future officers will have to deal with demands of an unsecure operational environment and the broader spectrum of operations they will face within the framework of national, regional or global interagency or organization's employment. A university level-type of education will undoubtedly provide leaders that are more flexible and capable. The military environment will develop the officer candidates mentally, physically and militarily. This will require a long term

investment and significant persuasion because young people will want to serve in the AAF and their country without sacrificing a proper education.

SMU offers a comprehensive academic and military education, and a rigorous training curriculum. Officer candidates share a common long-term experience in a military environment that allows cadets to “grow militarily, intellectually, physically, and morally/ethically.” This experience creates a life-long bond among university classmates which may help later for creating relationships and building team cohesion.⁴¹ This is a distinctive value which emphasizes once again the advantage of the long term system of education.

Another consideration during these four academic years is the effort to cope with the difficult undergraduate degree study program. In both the difficult electronic study program and also in management, of necessity the primary emphasis of the military students, before becoming an officer, will be on their non-military curriculum. This emphasis “tends to detract from their military-related education and training”⁴² and also create problems in leadership development.

Although students may have difficulties in assimilating the academic program, this contributes to providing the necessary leader qualities. The SMU has the educational environment and the structure to provide the future leaders with the skills and competencies required for the uncertain and challenging operational environment. The future will require competent officers, and military education must “invest in human capital as much as in hardware” and to “train and retrain” everyone “as necessary... in problem solving techniques”... “to contribute to quality improvement.”⁴³

The past systems that prepared officers only as warriors is now obsolete because of the political system, missions and environments within which the future officer will operate. In answering the question of what are the qualities required for the future, from demands of

missions in NATO and multinational institutions, a university level education is a precondition. All this is reinforced by the requirements for future integration into society, after early or full retirement. So more discussions will be required to determine if this is the appropriate education, from the perspective of relevance of “too much education.” The author will not explore this related issue further, as it is beyond the scope of this paper. The future does not require a “Rambo” type leader equipped with technical skills but leaders able to judge and to apply critical reasoning and creative thinking. It appears that a university level education is the one that meets the requirements.

In the SMU a rivalry exists between military and academic programs. Everyone tries to promote their area as the most important. For this reason, the balance between academic and military courses and study programs is difficult to achieve, as each department is myopically focused on their own disciplines. Focusing too much on the academic program can distract from military general education and operational training or vice versus. This will negatively affect the military abilities or the academic learning. This balance will be difficult to provide since the civilian staff has no military experience to understand the importance of military education and training, or because officers typically have no university academic background.⁴⁴

There is a faulty belief that the biggest burden of the SMU is created not from military education but from their respective academic demands in management or electronics. Important here is the perception that the combination of academic requirements with other priorities like military and physical training and strict military discipline, creates the necessary conditions to assimilate academic information. Physical and military training for required performance is injected gradually from the first day until completion of basic officer course after graduation from the university.⁴⁵

The SMU curriculum supports creating a military learning environment that also sustains leadership development, but it would not be significantly different if other branches were chosen. From another perspective, the academic program does not allow the students to focus on military education and training because the first priority is the academic program. This impacts negatively on leadership development and military preparation. It can not be reasonably compared with the previous system since it consisted only of military education and training.

Another issue is that the curriculum seems to be adapted to the faculty needs instead of the students' desires. The electives program, for example, manifests the lack of experience compared with other military education systems. Electives in SMU are not prepared and designed to allow students to select courses which support professional growth and interests, nor does this program support the awarding of additional skill identifiers. There are only a small number of choices which results in the lack of support for the overall long-term professional development of officers candidates. The Military Art and Science Department did not offer more than two electives and did not offer students the opportunity to learn a topic they find interesting in military science. This resulted in the impression that electives are offered by other departments just to create space for more instructor or professors or for them to complete the requirements demanded from their roles.⁴⁶

However, the curricula is not everything: even if we have a quality program of study, with a perfect balance of academic and military, the highest quality can not be provided if the methods are not appropriate and upgraded. Accordingly, an examination of the methodologies applied in SMU is warranted.

Methodology and Adult Learning Process

"Perspectives on adult learning have changed dramatically over the decades. Adult learning has been viewed as a process of being freed from the oppression of being illiterate, a means of gaining knowledge and skills, a way to satisfy learner needs, and a process of critical self-reflection that can lead to transformation. The phenomenon of adult learning is complex and difficult to capture in any one definition."

From: Cranton, P. *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning*⁴⁷

The methodology and application of adult learning techniques in the SMU is important in two respects. First, methodology may have a higher importance than curricula's content to educate the future officers in "how to think" versus "what to think." Secondly, the future integration of SMU in the national and European higher education system (according the Bologna process,) requires adapting of the learning approach according to adult learning methodologies. This focus will be generally considered for the actual system of education and training of future officers in Albania.

The efforts started in 2000 for creating the university level of officer candidates' education system and finalized with the transformation of the Military Academy into the Military University will continue until the complete adaptation of a western model. This will be followed by integrating the curriculum, methodologies of teaching and instructing, structures and procedures...⁴⁸

It is not only the system that is important but also the means, ways and the learning methodologies to create self-directed and self-developed learners. The SMU today can not be proud of the lack of the progress on these issues despite the mandate to create long-life learners. Adapting modern adult learning methods are still far behind the other education institutions in NATO member's countries. Classes continue with lecture lessons as the primary type of methodology used in delivering instructions. A lecture centric approach and environment fails to

challenge the thinking process. Teaching in this way will foster neither critical thinking nor creativity.

The courses are formatted for lecture type or mixed lecture and seminar type classes but unfortunately there are professors who run all their classes in lecture groups of 50-80 students.⁴⁹ In the examination students are obligated to reproduce by memory the material they are taught, but they are rarely pushed to think about it. The times do not require rote memorization but training for the ability to think deeply and creatively, to seek and find solutions, which should be the main focus of SMU efforts.⁵⁰ The cost will be in deficient analysis and reasoning ability and low quality officers.

The reason the methods are not upgraded is because some of the professors have for decades been in the old model and although they deserve due respect for their knowledge and passion, some have never attempted to adapt to the methodology of adult learning. To transform to the seminar type of classes is impossible under the current organizational structure. More instructors will be needed and this method is preferred less by the faculty because a lecture class is evaluated as 1.5 times higher than a seminar class, which in turn makes it easier to complete the required standards.

From another perspective this education is not evolving because academic education methods come from other universities and imported into the Military University. Related to this is the fact that some professors are well known in the academic world while others have no experience at all. With the dynamics of change today, the risk of obsolete knowledge and methods is real, especially because the AF is conservative in nature and reluctant to change. The feedback process will take too much time before the actual possibilities for improvements can be realized. So what happens today will be tomorrow's lesson learned or unlearned.

The approach to teaching and training is always important since it makes it possible and easier to achieve the end state. The methodology is far from being able to provide today's student with skills as self-directed and long-life learners. Critical and creative thinking can not be created in an environment that is instructor centric. Stimulation of the thinking process is the educational goal today but in many ways is still in theory only. To change and transform this methodology will take time, efforts and resources since it will require a "train" the trainers and to "teach" the professors approach. This will be more difficult than it seems today because other problems will no doubt appear in due course, so it may be better to allow the institutions that are responsible for civilian education to provide undergraduate education. A choice may come not from rehabilitation or improvement of the existing system but from an alternative system that is different from the present or the past one.

The Cost

The budget is limited for the needs of our armed forces (as it usually is true everywhere). Funds are needed for military personnel payments, for the modernization of training facilities, for equipment and new weapons systems. It is important to have one education system that fulfills the qualitative demands of the future AF officers with the lowest possible cost.

Many of the elements related to cost depend on the input: that is the number of students and on the number of the areas of studies (diplomas) offered. The cost depends on the output too: the retention and attrition rate.

The SMU is a burden on military expenditure since the students bear no costs to attend. In Albania, public education is free for everyone, but the Military University has additional related costs such as the funds needed to provide "uniforms, accommodation, learning, books cost to the students nothing at all."⁵¹

The cost of education is high if we consider that AAF, consisting of officers, NCO and enlisted will be approximately 14, 500, enlisted and professional soldiers.⁵² The annual requirement is less than 200 officers (2nd Lieutenants) and until this year less than 150 students have been enrolled (there were 120 students accepted for the academic year 2004-2005, and 140 students for 2008-2009)⁵³. Academic selection will result in failure in academic requirement like all other universities but for them this is not really a burden as much as the university can educate them for another year with no cost and the market does not need them as urgently as the AF does. A new university means not only students and staff but also facilities, materials and didactical help, which surely will be more expensive especially for the electronics majors.

It is doubtful if any small country can afford a University that only produces 150 officers per year. The system does not offer the possibility to increase the number of officers produced in the event of an emergency. There will be academic failures in each cohort. The military component is demanding (and this is specific only to the SMU) and some of them will fail because of these requirements. Another factor is physical training: some students will not succeed and sometimes they simply can not find time for PT because of academic requirements. Not to mention that students have the right to resign after their first year. If the student input is 140 -150 per academic year, the cost per person will increase because of attrition. From 120 students in the class four years ago, only 87 officers graduated and were commissioned.⁵⁴

Organizational issues are also present when we discuss the cost. SMU has a prepared and devoted staff but being a small university it does not have the required academic staff and faculty. For this reason the university hires a number of professors from other universities. The obligations of their institutions create obstacles and the SMU has to replace them often. "For the

better of the work in the future the key personnel aims to increase the number of academic staff⁵⁵ that can be translated as an increase in the cost.

From the law for higher education a university must have at least two faculties⁵⁶ and at least three fields of knowledge divisions, from them at least two departments, in one faculty⁵⁷. The number of departments and sections is somewhat high but sometimes is increased to provide the faculty needed to provide the education. For this reason the number of the faculty and administrative personnel is relatively high and expensive. Not to mention that from this law a university is obliged to offer study programs for all three cycles of education,⁵⁸ BA(S), MA(S) and PhD which is unrealistic to expect full compliance for some years.

The payment of the civilian instructors is 35 % higher because working in a military environment is more difficult and to provide incentive to attract the best academic staff to work for SMU. This increases the costs artificially while the civilian staff does not really care for the military rules and norms students have to achieve.

The cost is the worse aspect of this system, especially as the cost is increased indirectly. If the cost is compared with the previous systems it is almost the same although the civilian staff increases artificially the cost of SMU and makes the system even more expensive. From this perspective, it seems the Military University and the Military Academy are not the best choices. Maybe the university level of education will be better provided by civil university and the resulting savings can go to recruiting, selection and military training and education in another alternative model. Before going to this model let's consider the last variable, that of flexibility.

Flexibility

The AAF is in perpetual transformation, reformation and modernization. The structures change so often that it is not clear how many 2nd Lieutenants (LT) will be needed four to five

years later. Although this is not the problem the issue is that in the university it takes almost five years to produce an officer. Flexibility seems to be another concern of the system.

The output numbers are difficult to predict but the numbers of students who fail will be costly and will make the system less flexible. The student input is approximately 150 per academic year but the outcome result was the graduation and commissioning of only 87 new officers (from 120 enrolled in the first academic year).⁵⁹

Under the circumstances when the AAF eliminated the reserve component it eliminated the ability to surge in a national emergency. If the situation changes or other issues arise that require the volunteer and professional AF system to increase manpower, the AAF will not be able to face the problem of fulfilling the needs for more officers with the existing system.

To change and adapt the SMU will take a lot of time and effort. To receive feedback on the education and training curricula will take more than four years. To assess the results of the changes in any given cohort will require another four year. The process could then take up to eight years from identifying a need for change, implementing change and finally assessing the efficiency of the change.

Summary

It is important that university level education is required as a precondition for future officers. The biggest advantage is the impact that the military environment has in creating the military leaders with character and in developing their leadership potential. This level is offered by SMU but it can be argued that other civil universities can offer the same academic program and requisite diploma.

The SMU is funded by taxes but is very expensive for a small armed forces, although, definitely very important for national interests. The Military University is promoting discourse and is taking more and more resources.

From another perspective it is not an AF core function to provide degrees or university level education as much as it is a responsibility to provide the military education and training for future officers. The army has different core missions and the SMU can focus on other tasks if the responsibility for university education is given to the institutions nationally in charge: civil higher education institutions, civilian colleges and universities. This will allow the military resources to go where they are required: to educate and train young officers to meet the national security challenges of the future.

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³⁷ Kenneth D. Carlson *Deliberate Process: Developing Strategic Leaders In The United States Air Force*, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, 2007, pp. 5-6

³⁸ Hyqmet Kelliçi, *UU "Skënderbej", e sotmja dhe e ardhmja e tij*,

³⁹ FM 7-0 *Training The Force* Department of the Army Washington, DC, (Publication Draft), 18 December 2007, pp 3-2, 3-3

⁴⁰ Volney J. Warner, *Preparing field grade leaders for today tomorrow*,

⁴¹ Kenneth G. Truesdale, *Officer Commissioning for the Next Century Training or Education?*, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama 1998, p 15

- ⁴² Ibid.,
- ⁴³ Peters, T. (1991). *Thriving on Chaos. Handbook for a Management Revolution* HarperCollins, New York, 1988 p. 386 -388
- ⁴⁴ Nënkolonel Ahmet Leka, *Arsimimi, baza intelektuale në përgatitjen profesionale të ushtarakut*, Revista Mbrojtja No 5 2008,
- ⁴⁵ *Oficerët e rinj dhe vizioni i arsimimit ushtarak shqiptar Intervistë me gjeneral major Perlat Sula, komandant i KDS*
- ⁴⁶ Planet Mësimorë të UUS – Viti Akademik 2007-2008.
- ⁴⁷ Cranton, P. (1994). *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, p. 3.
- ⁴⁸ Revista Mbrojtja - Nr. 6/2007, *KDS-ja, promotor i zhvillimeve dhe modernizimit të FA-së*, Intervistë me Komandantin e Doktrinave dhe Stërviçjes, kolonel Sandër Lleshi
- ⁴⁹ Plani Mësimor i Fakultetit të Menaxhimit për vitin Academic 2007-2008
- ⁵⁰ *KDS-ja, promotor i zhvillimeve dhe modernizimit të FA-së*, Intervistë me Komandantin e Doktrinave dhe Stërviçjes, kolonel Sandër Lleshi
- ⁵¹ Revista Mbrojtja - Nr. 09/2008, *Universiteti i dy diapazoneve*; Intervistë me Rektorin e Universitetit Ushtarak “Skënderbej” Prof.Dr. Kol® Elmas Leci
- ⁵² “*Shtesa në pension vetëm për pjesën e mbetur pas miratimit të ligjit*” Interviste me Zëvendësministren e Mbrojtjes Zj. Zana Xhuka
- ⁵³ Revista Mbrojtja - Nr. 09/2008, *Universiteti i dy diapazoneve*; Intervistë me Rektorin e Universitetit Ushtarak “Skënderbej” Prof.Dr. Kol. R Elmas Leci
- ⁵⁴ Mina Qirici, *UU “Skënderbej” Diplomohen oficerët e rinj*, Gazeta Ushtria dt. 19.09.2008
- ⁵⁵ Novruz Koci, *UU “Skënderbej”, e sotmja dhe e ardhmja e tij*,
- ⁵⁶ Qendra e Publikimeve Zyrtare: Ligj,Nr 9741 “*Për Arsimin e Lartë në Republikën e Shqipërisë*”,Neni 5, pika 4
- ⁵⁷ Ibid., Neni 9, pika 2
- ⁵⁸ Ibid., Neni 5, pika 4
- ⁵⁹ Mina Qirici, *UU “Skënderbej” Diplomohen oficerët e rinj*,

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Existing Alternatives

Today not all the officers in the Albanian Armed Forces receive their commissions by completing the SMU: some can be selected from university graduates to meet AAF needs. This is usually the case for specialties like medical, law, engineering and information technology. Until now, although it exists, the author did not mention it because it is seen as a system not to prepare high ranks officers but only to provide specialists.

In this system, officer candidates are graduate students holding a BA (BS) degree, who takes a 9 month course of military education and training in SMU and other schools and units prior to their commissioning.

Until now the investment in this source has not been taken seriously and is considered as something temporary until the SMU can produce officers. The author himself did not believe in the way they are recruited, educated and trained to provide the qualities, skills and competencies required.

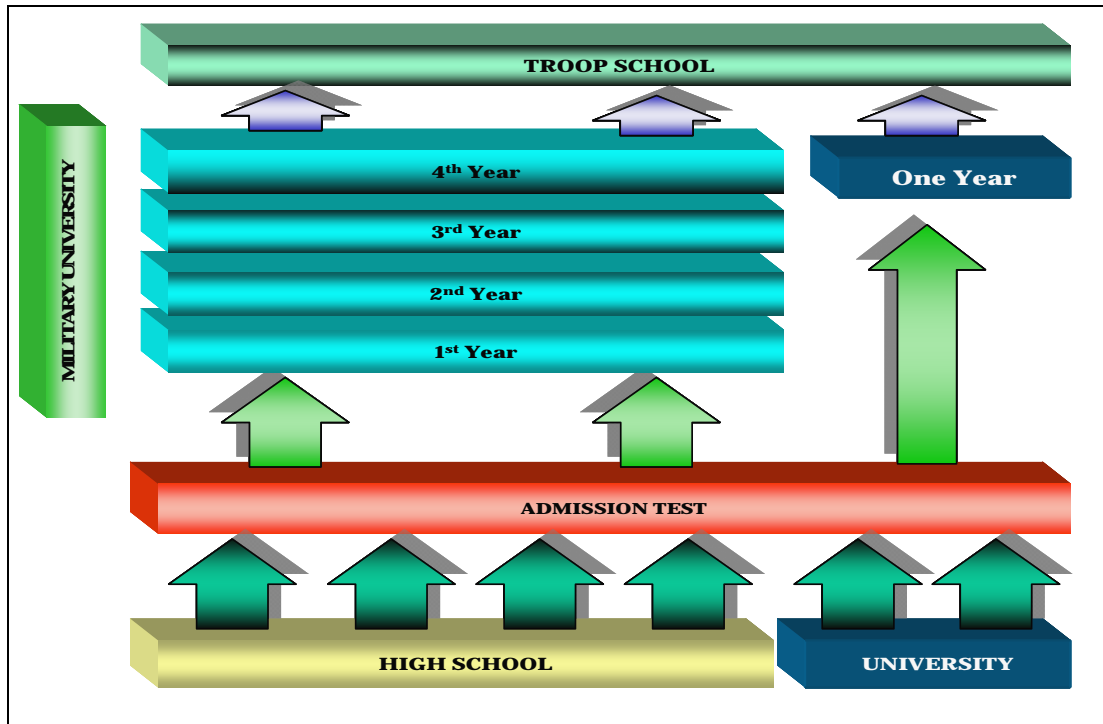


Figure 3. The Existing Military Education System(s)
Source: *Created by author*

In the alternative proposal the author will recommend one alternative for two different systems of education, which provide the possibility to switch from one to another without any political or legal considerations. It is possible to modify existing systems and to use the actual situation to achieve a proposal of another alternative system.

Alternative Proposal

Changes are not easily accepted in our society and especially in the AF. But if another approach to officer commissioning is less expensive, more flexible and provides superlative quality it should be taken into consideration. The remainder of the paper will address this alternative system.

Today all officers in the Albanian Armed Forces receive their commissions by completing the SMU or other Military Universities/Academies abroad in allied countries.

These two commissioning sources of officers for AAF have been in existence for the last 10 years. The majority of officers are commissioned after finishing the MA or the last year of SMU. Actually this is to be the only source of commissioning after 4 years of university studies and military education and training, for undergraduate students (for Military Academy used to be three years without providing a university degree).

The other commissioning source was for graduate students (for this category the precondition is a BA (BS) degree) who took a nine month course of military education and training, in SMU and other schools and units prior to their graduation. This contingent, as mentioned before, is recruited only to complete the AAF needs for specialists, like medicine, engineering etc.. They haven't proven to be as well prepared or the same quality as their peers from alternative commissioning sources. They miss a significant part of military competencies and capabilities primarily because of the approach for training and education. The investment in this source has not been taken seriously and is regarded as something temporary, notwithstanding that the AF will always require specialists.

The students are recruited and selected after their graduation. This is an attractive opportunity for graduates who failed to find a position after graduation.

We can consider a new model which will keep the university level of education but at a much lower cost, will provide the quality by sequential training and education and add flexibility.

The actual recruiting process was not designed to hire the best candidates rather than to hire the available individuals. A BA (S) degree is a prerequisite and a military career is seen only

as another opportunity for those who failed to get another one. If they changed their mind they could shift easily to their previous status and no sanction or consequence would follow. This creates difficulties in motivation and may persuade the instructor to lower standards, especially in training or military performance. Recruiting needs to be changed with financial support and sanctions imposed for standards not being met. At the same time modification in training and education is required.

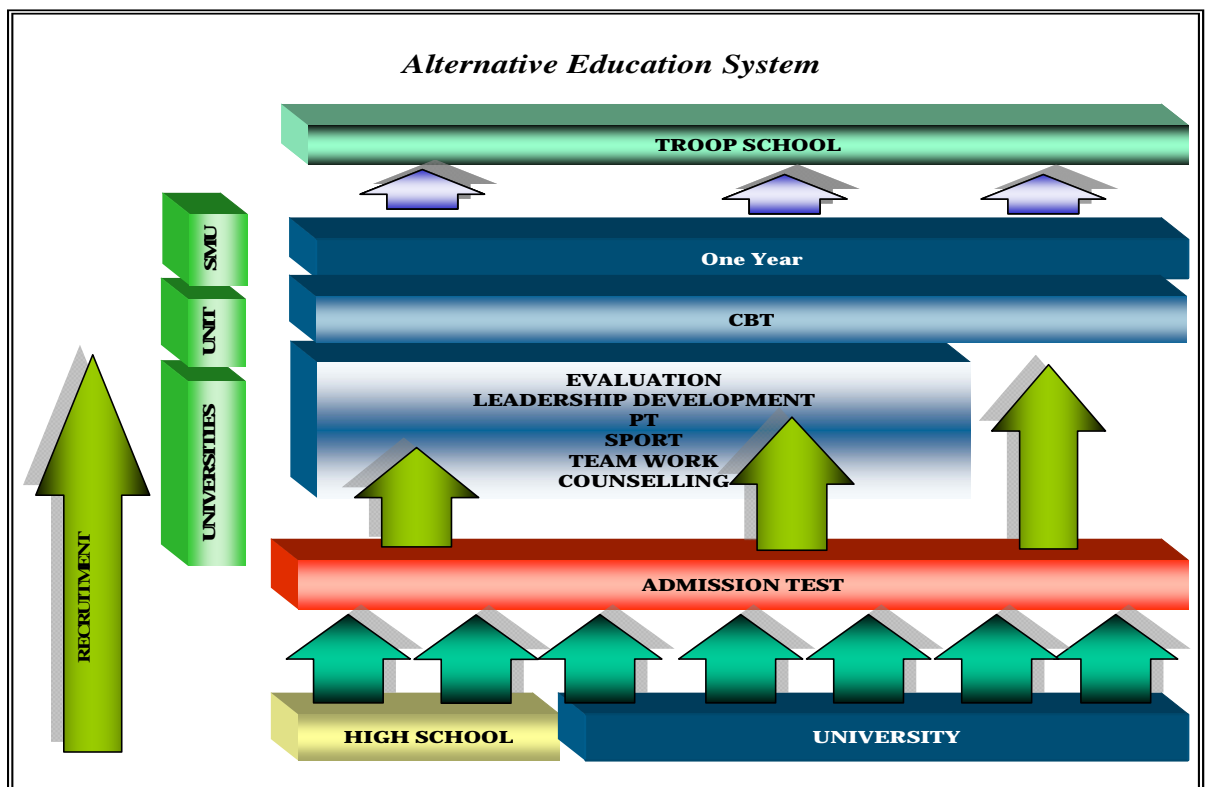


Figure 4. The Alternative Military Education System
Source: Created by author

The first lesson learned from the previous recruiting was that we recruit them very late, in some cases only some days before the beginning of the course.

The selection process must aim to hire the best candidates available and to recruit them at the right time. Albania is a small country and has 11 public institutions that provides university level education located in seven cities¹ (not including the SMU) and 17 smaller private institutions² that provides first university degree level education (BA or BS) located mainly in Tirana, where the majority of the students are concentrated.

The available candidates are expected to be from public universities, which means, at most only seven recruiting centers are needed. They must be supported by the AF marketing system to recruit the students. The recruiting should be an open and long term process to offer all the students from the first to the third year of studies an opportunity to apply for admission. An early and long term planning will improve the quality and increase the number of candidates who will apply for admission. In this way the AAF will be not only linked to the best part of the society - students, but will also be represented in the highest institutions of culture and education. The representation will not be an issue if it is for SMU and although they will miss the strong bounds within military personnel, they will have a better relation to civilian society and institutions.

Although, “historically there have been no tendencies in the Albanian army to seize control over politics and civic affairs”³ this recruiting base will make nonexistent the risk of creating an isolated institution under the control of an elitist officer corps.

Financial aid and motivation is another important factor needed before and after the recruiting and admission process. Admission to the officer candidate program is going to occur after the first academic year of the university is completed. The decision to admit should not be done by the recruiters but by a general admission board. The recruiters are responsible for completing the paperwork of academic accomplishments, the physical (medical) records and the

assessments of their character and leadership potential. From all the candidates only the best should be selected according to fixed criteria.

Before or during the first academic year, these students should not have any obligation for training but they will be in-processed. If they are academically successful they will be qualified for admission by a special commission.

The first cycle for BA (BS) degree continues usually for three academic years (AY). After the second (or just after their graduation if they are not admitted during the first) AY they have to complete CBT. Every student at SMU has to accomplish it in the actual curriculum (the same training, the same instructor, the same standards). After certification the financial help or scholarship will continue or if they fail they have to repeat it before separation in case of a second failure. After this, once per month (one weekend) they have to assemble together to take classes for general military education and in this way communicate and interact with the SMU staff. During these meetings they will have time for general military subjects, PT, competitions aimed to enhance cohesion. In these meetings they will be trained in basic drill and general military doctrine and leadership. It should not be only the military Art and Science program, but something similar like a preparatory course to create the team cohesion and understanding of doctrinal terms. CBT is not an issue since it is training required for all future soldiers. Again it will be possible to keep the university level education and since all candidates already have degrees they can concentrate totally on military education and training.

Two months after graduation (to allow third year students the opportunity to finish the CBT) they have to report to SMU and begin the one year officer course. It's possible to conduct training and education with the currently available SMU military staff while someone from the staff can be assigned to the universities for evaluations and assessments of the prospective

students. During this year the students will be challenged with field training (“Steel Warrior”) which is six weeks long in very stressful conditions that will test their physical condition, mental agility and motivation. During one year it is possible to conduct all the training that is required for officer candidates, to include leadership development and general military education and training. The one year officer course that currently is conducted with the graduated candidates in SMU should be redesigned and become a Commissioning Officer Course.

This program should be challenging and composed of military general education and training, leadership development and physical fitness to instill an officers’ perspective while building an appreciation for the soldier’s profession. The program should emphasize the physical, intellectual and warrior competencies. The education must provide the knowledge of the doctrines for all AAF, basics in operations and tactics, and leadership before allowing them to join the Basic Officer Course after commissioning.

A leadership development program has to be implemented and leadership development will take more time from their study and free time. The leaders appointed at different levels have to lead their organizations during everyday routine duties or training not only in battle rhythm schedule. They should also be required to contribute to team building, training and managing non-curricular activities and missions. Assessment and evaluation in leader development progress together with leading and supervising, delegating and instructing, coaching and mentoring.

It is widely accepted that actual leadership experience is important and necessary to make the officers competent and able to complete the variety of future tasks and challenges expected. As mentioned before, the number of trainees in the COC should be larger than the anticipated needs. Only the best performing candidates should be considered for commissioning and this will

increase the ethical approach in evaluation and competition for all the candidates who complete the program. This will improve the quality because of peer pressure and the successful candidates that can not be commissioned will serve as a reserve and increasing the flexibility of this system.

The actual cost is the main concern of this system. If we pay only the cost for the food paid today to the contractors in SMU (700 lekë⁴ per day) it will be useful for the students, so they can concentrate on their lessons and not worry about another job to pay expenses. This can be increased and it can be paid for around three years. If the prospective military students in SMU have everything free and are paid for four years, more funds can be provided than are needed to support the recruited students. The dismissed academic and support staff will be another valuable resource. It is clear that the cost is going to be less, and the possibility to support more people is achieved increasing the quality of education.

Again we close the gap in education level, provide the right future officers with a lower cost and create a very flexible system.

Recommendations

“When reality is different than the plan, believe the reality.”

William McCollum PhD

Modification of the system will take time and effort. As discussed the previous system of education did not provide the quality required for a future in the military nor does it create the opportunities for later integration into society. However, in this system the cost is very high for the education and for other associated expenditures (living, equipment etc). The retention rate makes it more expensive. The system is not flexible since it takes so long to produce an officer nor can it be modified to meet emergency needs of the AAF.

The Military University provides the quality and offers the best possibilities to equip the officer candidate with the competencies and attributes required for their future in the military or for integration into society. However the academic program distracts the students from focusing on military education and leadership development. The core task for the University seems to be providing a university level education and degrees and not the required one: providing military education and training for officer candidates.

The other values indicate that this system is not the best especially considering the AAF limitation of financing. The cost is increased artificially for the organization and consumes a lot of resources to support education and other costs related with education or living.

Again the system is not flexible since it takes more than four years to prepare an officer. From the other perspective it takes four years to see the product and if it is not the required result, it will take more than four years to make the changes resulting from the feedback offered from their performance in units. If changes are required due to the operational environment it will take almost eight years to see the final result of the changes.

The alternative system as mentioned above will keep the university level of education for the officer candidates, will provide an improved military education and training program (compared with the actual military science and training program) that makes it possible to maintain a high quality of officers. These officers will be better equipped to learn from their experience and this is important for their preparedness and future abilities. The cost of this system is going to be less than $\frac{1}{4}$ of the cost of the Military University: the cost of the degree will not be bore by military, nor for their living expenses and the cost of expensive civilian staff will not be the responsibility of the military.

Instead of the four year it takes today in SMU, it is going to take only one year of military education, and some additional funding such as stipends or per-diem, significantly reducing the cost. The last indicator, adaptability will also be very high. It is possible to train and educate more students than needed to meet the acquisition needs and to increase quality, to make the environment more ethical and to create a leadership reserve just in case it will be needed.

According to the value hierarchy the alternative version seems to be the better choice without taking into consideration the legal issues or the methodology and the needs as a social institution. This can be seen from the following figure and table:

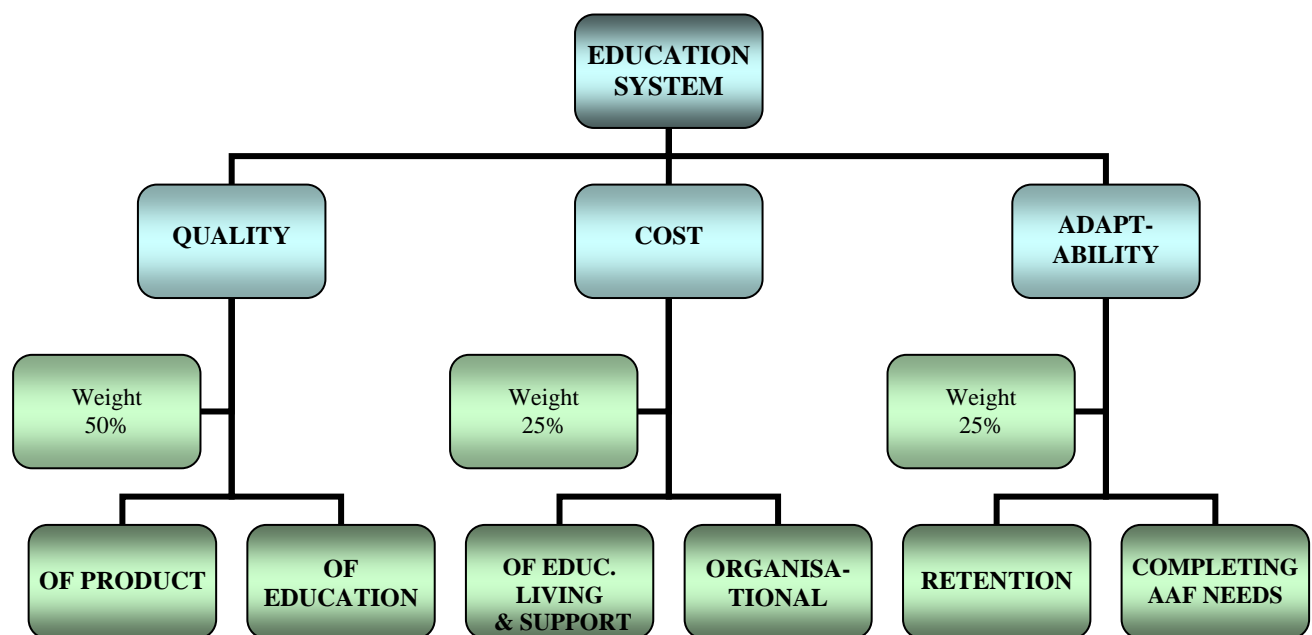


Figure 5. The Value Hierarchy

Source: *Created by the author*

Table 2. Evaluation of Alternatives

ALTERNATIVES OF OFFICERS CANDIDATES' EDUCATION SYSTEM	EVALUATION CRITERIA									RESULT
	Quality			Cost			Adaptability			
	Evaluation	Weight	Score	Evaluation	Weight	Score	Evaluation	Weight	Score	
Military Academy	1.0	2	2.0	2.0	1	2.0	1.5	1	1.5	5.5
Military University	2.5	2	5.0	1.0	1	1.0	1.5	1	1.5	7.5
Alternative System	2.5	2	5.0	3.0	1	3.0	3.0	1	3.0	11.0

Source: Created by the author

Note: Higher is best

The alternative system appears more promising. There appears to be no significant concerns of quality, cost or flexibility.

¹ Albanian Ministry of Education Home Page available in internet from http://www.mash.gov.al/arsimi_larte/home.html, accessed 22 July 2008

² Ibid

³ Enika Abazi, *Defense Reform of the Albanian Armed Forces: Democratization and Transformation* available in internet from http://www.ciaonet.org/olj/co/co_sep04/co_sep04c.pdf. accessed 09/02/2008

⁴ Albanian Currency \$1= 83 lekë (July 2008)

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